

# The Use of Eclectic Method in Teaching Turkish to Foreign Students

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## Abstract

Although there are debates in the post-method era, it is seen that the traditional methods used in teaching foreign languages continue to be used persistently in Turkey. It has been observed in the literature review that there is a method problem in foreign language teaching of Turkish; and studies have been conducted in limited number on the methods. The main purpose of this study is to present theoretical knowledge on the eclectic method considered as a method that could be used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The target group of this study consists of practitioners (teachers) and field experts (academicians). The practical studies conducted by the researchers on the eclectic method and the use of this method by the practitioners in Turkish lessons are considered as the contributions made to the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** Turkish as a foreign language, method, eclectic method

## 1. Introduction

Only the ability of speaking the language and knowledge of the grammatical rules are not enough for the knowledge of a language. Knowledge of a foreign language requires speaking the language, understanding what is listened to, writing in accordance with grammatical rules and understanding any written text. For many years, the question "Which methods should be used to gain the basic skills?" is the most important issue for those working in the field of language teaching.

Many language teaching methods have been created and applied in foreign language teaching in parallel to the developments from past to present. Although each method aims to teach the language as soon as possible and in the most effective way, none of these methods could answer this need alone (Çiçek, 2015).

It is important to mention that Cooperative learning is an eclectic method which draws from different fields related to teaching, namely, sociology, linguistics, psychology and more (Duzzy, 2002).

Cooperative learning not only increases academic achievement in especially high-level perception, but also builds trust among students, and contributes positively to students' attention and attitudes towards lessons (Yapıcı, 2016).

Although the methodology of language teaching has been discussed for many years abroad, a limited number of studies have been conducted in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. (Yaylı, 2004; Yorulmaz, 2009; Akbal, 2008; Yaylı & Yavuz, 2008; Işcan, 2011; Tabak & Göçer, 2014).

In this study, the eclectic method will be introduced theoretically and suggestions for its use in teaching Turkish as a foreign language will be presented.

The following main hypotheses have been accepted in the study:

1. It is necessary to use the eclectic method in teaching Turkish to foreigners.
2. The eclectic method has a more important position when compared to other language learning methods in teaching Turkish to foreigners.

This study has been limited to the determination of the ways for taking benefit from the eclectic method being one of the language teaching methods in the process of teaching Turkish to foreigners. Other language teaching methods have not been taken into consideration in the study.

The problem of the study has been determined within the frame of the concepts "teaching Turkish to foreigners" and "taking benefit from the eclectic method in the process of teaching Turkish to foreigners". Within this direction; the problem sentence of the study could be determined as follows: "Why is it important and necessary to take benefit from the eclectic method in teaching Turkish to foreigners? Does eclectic method have any other importance when compared to other methods in this process?" Within the frame of this problem, answers will be searched for the following questions:

- Why is it important and necessary to take benefit from the contemporary language teaching methods in teaching Turkish to foreigners?
- What is the function of the eclectic method in the process of teaching Turkish to foreigners?
- What are the ways for taking benefit from the eclectic method in teaching Turkish to foreigners?

## 2. Method

The study has been patterned in literature review model. The literature review is considered as "the use of ideas in the literature to justify the particular approach to the topic and the selection of methods" (Hart, 1998).

### 3. Theoretical Framework

It is obvious that no single method will be sufficient in the field of foreign language teaching today. It is advocated by some linguists that the teachers could be as effective as theorists in the solutions of problems in foreign language teaching (Sebüktekin, 1981).

In language teaching; instead of depending on a specific method in classroom activities, the idea of using an appropriate method for each situation has occurred. It is called as eclectic method and it is a combination of methods (Demirel, 1988).

Eclectic method is a language teaching method that combines various approaches and methods to teach language depending on the objectives of the course and the abilities of the learners. It is also known as mixed-methods.

This method was first used in 1920s-1930s by English linguists (Henry Sweet and Harold Palmer). Then, Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Mellow (2000) began to use the term “principle declecticism”. In their opinion, the principle declecticism is a desirable, consistent and pluralistic language teaching method.

The eclectic method is a combination of different teaching and learning methods and approaches. This method is an effective method for students at all ages and levels. Learning is fun and innovative because of the unique structure of the process (Kumar, 2013). According to Tarone and Yule (1989), this method is quite democratic, because it gives a chance to the teacher for selection. The eclectic method provides teachers with a third option, because it combines the elements of traditional and cognitive methods to make them both strong. It includes the integration of content, structuring of information, reduction of prejudice, pedagogy of equality and strengthening of competitiveness. Teachers should help children learn to control their own mental processes and to use them effectively. Teaching a foreign language should be simple for both teachers and learners and should be within the abilities of all teachers. (<http://www.observerbd.com/2015/02/13/72233.php>)

This method is called as eclectic method, because it takes and uses the useful parts of each method. The teacher chooses the method he or she will use according to the need and purpose. For example; cognitive method in the teaching of the rules of linguistic knowledge, ear-language habit method and communicative method could be used to gain the skill of speaking and listening (Demirel, 2008).

This method in which the students are active is a method that attracts interest and desire towards the learnt language in the students and it appeals to more than one sense. When the activities of the students are organized, techniques such as demonstration, question-answer, drama, simulation, group work and games are used (Barin, 1994).

### 4. Principles of the Eclectic Method

- a) Language should be taught in target language. The native language of the student should also be included when necessary.
- b) It should be taken into consideration that there is a relationship between motivation and the learning of the learner when the language learning is not desired by the students and is not sufficient in terms of time
- c) Word usage should be started early and words should be used in sentences. Vocabulary items should be taught in context.
- d) So much time should not be spent for mechanical repetitions, communication-oriented activities should be conducted.
- e) Language teaching should be appropriate to the scientific field of the student
- f) Four language skills should be included together (Gömleksiz, 2000)
- g) Language teaching should be vital
- h) Students should be provided with a language learning request
- i) Teaching should be from easy to hard and from concrete to abstract
- j) It should not be forgotten that there are individual differences among the students (Barin, 1994)

### 5. The Criticism of the Method

The eclectic method has a wider horizon of thought and also a wider application area when compared to other methods. Therefore; this method is very popular among the teachers and a wider application area has been found today. However, teachers applying this method should be very knowledgeable, know all the methods, learn linguistics and psychology. Otherwise, they will not be able to decide which aspects of the methods are good, which ones are inadequate and will not be able to choose the method most convenient for them. The eclectic method is far more than a method; it is the method selection technique. In order for a new method to be formed, it is necessary to combine the information after the selection step, that is, synthesis. Moreover; each teacher choosing a method according to his/her own way leads to confusion in institutions where there are many teachers. In this case, all teachers need to come together and choose the best methods or methods they find useful and they also need to synthesize a new synthesis. (Arak, 2014).

This method requires the teachers to have a broad knowledge of different teaching strategies, methods and techniques and the ability to be able to make a right choice between good and bad. All these requirements cause to over-dependence of the quality of teaching on the teacher excessively and the hardship of finding a teacher having these skills is among the deficiencies of the method. When this method is preferred in foreign language teaching institutions, each teacher chooses a method on their own and it causes confusion in institutions where there are many teachers. In this case, all teachers need to come together and choose the best methods or methods that they find useful and to synthesize a new synthesis. (Memiş & Erdem, 2013).

## 6. Use of Eclectic Method in Turkish Language as a Foreign Language (Course sample)

**Topic:** Basic skills in teaching Turkish

**Objective:** To improve the vocabulary of the students.

**Level:** A2-B1

**Method:** Eclectic Method

**Technique:** Concept Map Technique

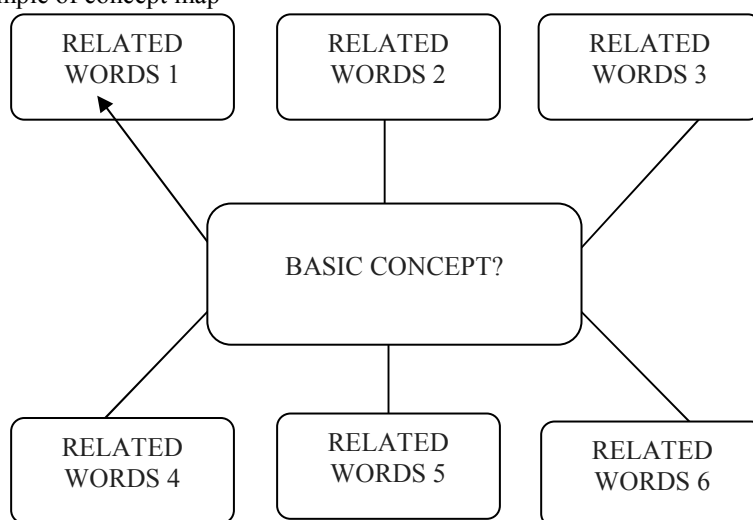
**Duration:** 20 min.

**Application:**

"Basic skills in Turkish teaching consist of two elements as understanding skills (reading, listening) and the skills of expression (speaking, writing) in general terms. Expression skills are the expressions of the individual's own feelings and thoughts in verbal or written way. Understanding skills are concerned with understanding a speaker or a written expression. The skills to achieve understanding of the feelings and thoughts of others by hearing or reading form the basis of understanding skills. Understanding skills could also be examined under two headings. These are Listening-Understanding Skills and Reading-Understanding Skills."

**Instruction:** Write the basic concepts and concept-related words in the following paragraph in the text.

Figure 1. Sample of concept map



## 7. Conclusion and Discussion

The eclectic method is a very common method based on the principle of choosing a method that is appropriate for the level and the interest level of the learners. There are many studies in the field of methodology. In the study conducted by Yun et.al. (2007); it has been found out that this method has increased the attention and motivation of students and English teachers in China have used this method in a wide spread manner. In the study conducted by Zhi (2004), it has been observed that the eclectic method contributes to the development of listening and reading skills, which increases the vocabulary knowledge of the students. It has been seen in the survey conducted by Jebiwot et.al. (2016) that the eclectic method has succeeded in teaching English language. In his study on direct, communicative and eclectic approaches; Siddiqi (2012) has come to the conclusion that teachers mostly prefer this method to enjoy themselves and feel free. Ubeid (2013) has also found that the selective studying method has improved the reading skills and vocabulary knowledge of the students. Kaur, Kohliand Devi (2008) has found that cognitive strategies and the eclectic approach have contributed to the development of mathematical skills of students with disabilities. In the study conducted by Rekha (2014), it has been found that students develop reading, listening comprehension, pronunciation skills with the use of the eclectic method. In the study conducted by Suleman and Hussain (2016), it has been specified that the eclectic method has increased the academic achievement of the students in learning English.

The main problem experienced in teaching Turkish as a foreign language is the method problem. A

very limited number of studies on the method lie at the root of this problem. The number of the studies conducted on the method should be increased. The aforementioned eclectic method is an effective method that could be used easily in teaching Turkish as a foreign language, because it gives freedom to choose teaching methods and also gives positive advantages in the acquisition of the skills. As in all other methods, the eclectic method has some weaknesses. Teachers who apply this method should have different teaching strategies, know all methods and techniques and learn linguistics and psychology at the same time so that they could determine the most appropriate method. All these requirements lead to the over-teaching of the quality of teaching (Baytar, 2016). This situation makes it difficult to find qualified teachers in the field of teaching Turkish to foreigners. This is one of the main problems in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The problem could be solved with qualified trainings, especially in undergraduate and graduate programs. The success of the language teaching methods, such as the eclectic method, has been proven by many studies; and the application and application of contemporary methods in Turkish as a foreign language will provide positive contributions to the teaching of Turkic languages to foreigners.

As a result of this study, the importance of using the elective method should be emphasized in the process of education and training of Turkic as a foreign language in the light of the above mentioned determinations. This method is particularly evidenced by the quotations and explanations that contribute to the development of language skills and vocabulary, and that this method is a contemporary foreign language teaching method in terms of foreign language teaching process.

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